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Gizmos in Las Vegas

THE future can get mighty shifty in the fast-paced field of high tech, but there's no better place to look for it than Las Vegas, at the International Winter Consumer Electronics Show, which claims to be "the biggest annual trade show in the world" and won't get any argument from us. This year's show filled the entire Las Vegas Convention Center and large sections of the nearby Riviera, Sahara, and Hilton hotels besides. More than ninety thousand people attended, none of whom, we were assured, were "the general public." It was easy, we can testify, to spend three days at the show and not see everything there was to see. But we managed to take in a robot named Hubot, with a "molded one-piece Hubody . . . made to last a lifetime" (just whose lifetime was left unclear); a Freudian video game called *The Institute*, in which the player-patient travels from dream to dream, searching for the key to his disorders, and (as one of the designers told us) "you see your psychiatrist with a gun to his head and you tell him to shoot himself, and he does;" a foam-headed hammer called the *Bit Banger*, for those suffering from computer frustration; and a handy exercise-bike accessory that lets you play video games as you pedal in place. "You get your exercise almost by osmosis," said George Coakley, the exuberant presi-



Bits
&
P.C.'s

1850 UNION STREET, #490 • SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94123 • (415) 929-7789

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November, 1983

CONTACT: Debbie Grosshandler; 415-929-7789

BIT BANGERTM INTRODUCED TO BATTLE COMPUTER FRUSTRATION

New Foam-Headed Mallet Strikes Long Overdue Blow In War Against Computers

Silicon Valley, CA -- The newest piece of software coming out of California's innovative Silicon Valley does not go inside computers. It's designed for external use only. In fact, it's used to strike computers... repeatedly... for fun.

Bit BangerTM, a foam-headed mallet with a soft, plastic handle is being introduced as the "modern cure for computer frustration." The novelty item's manufacturer, Bits & P.C.'s of San Francisco, states that the Bit Banger offers relief for the frustrated computer user without causing any damage to the computer.

"When your computer refuses to cooperate," said Debbie Grosshandler, President of Bits & P.C.'s and Bit Banger inventor, "simply administer several sharp raps with a Bit Banger. Your stress will disappear and your computer will remain unharmed."

Grosshandler adds that Bit Bangers are compatible with all makes of computers, from main frames to home models. "We also have documentation of Bit Bangers assisting people to score higher on video games," she said, tongue firmly in cheek.

The 13½-inch tall Bit Bangers come in an attractively-designed package complete with a Bit Banger Hanger and Instruction Book. "The 16-page Instruction Book consists of a series of hand-drawn cartoon illustrations depicting various computer problems which can be alleviated with the help of a Bit Banger," said Grosshandler. Problems such as "out of memory," "syntax error," "fatal error," and "system down" are dealt with using humor and wit.

-more-

Currently, Grosshandler is marketing Bit Bangers throughout California. "We feel the greatest initial need exists in the Silicon Valley," she said. "But we're slowly moving east, and we'll be available wherever there are frustrated computer operators."

Bit Bangers may be ordered over the telephone by dialing the Toll Free number: 800-227-3900; or ordered through the mail by writing: Bits & P.C.'s, 1850 Union Street, # 490, San Francisco, CA 94123. Anticipated retail price is \$6.95 (California residents should call toll free 1-800-632-2122).

"We're hoping to market Bit Bangers in computer stores, department stores and novelty shops for the 1983 Christmas season," said Grosshandler. "But Bit Bangers are a gift that will be appreciated during any time of the year."

While Bit Bangers are obviously intended for fun usage, Grosshandler sees a deeper meaning to their evolution. "I've had extensive experience with computers since 1976 as a financial analyst for the oil and chemical industries," she said. "I was originally motivated by a cartoon depicting a character hitting a computer with a hammer. It got me thinking and I began extensive research into ergonomics, or, the study of how machines affect human psychology.

"We know especially from European studies and research that the use of computers and video display terminals is directly associated with tremendous anxiety, frustration and even physical disorders. We also know that the best way to learn how to operate computers is in a relaxed, open, friendly atmosphere. From these concepts, it was an easy step to the Bit Banger.

"Striking a computer at a moment of frustration can release that frustration and allow the operator a chance to try again with a fresh psychological outlook. And the best way to hit a computer is with a non-damaging instrument. Thus, the Bit Banger was born."

Bits & P.C.'s intends to design, produce and distribute other specialty items relating to the computer industry. "We have a fully illustrated book in the works for the future," said Grosshandler. "But right now our major objective is letting people know that they no longer must suffer from the plague of infirmities and frustrations that computer usage can cause. They now have a healthful and humorous alternative... the Bit Banger."

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: DECEMBER 9, 1983

CONTACT: DEBBIE GROSSHANDLER, 415-929-7789, OR

LEN FILPPU, 415-326-3119

SPACELAB I ASTRONAUTS ARE SENT A BIT BANGERtm TO COMBAT COMPUTER FRUSTRATION

San Francisco, CA -- SpaceLab I mission astronauts, whose landing was delayed due to a computer malfunction, were today sent a Bit Bangertm, a foam-headed mallet designed to beat computer frustration.

Bit Banger is a hot, new, computer-related novelty item, which is used to strike uncooperative computers. "Hitting a recalcitrant computer several times with a Bit Banger gives psychological relief to the frustrated computer operator," said Debbie Grosshandler, president of Bits & P.C.'s, the manufacturer of Bit Banger. "I hope NASA will equip all future space flights with Bit Bangers," she continued. "Our astronaut in space can't vent their frustrations by taking a brisk walk around the block. They need Bit Bangers for emergency use, just as do all of us down here on earth."

Bits & P.C.'s of San Francisco, CA, is marketing Bit Bangers throughout California in department stores, computer stores, and gift shops. Bit Bangers can also be ordered over the telephone by calling toll free, 800-632-2122 in California, and toll free 800-227-3900 for the rest of the U.S.A. Suggested retail price is \$6.95

The tongue-in-cheek Bit Banger has a more serious side to it. "We know from several studies that the use of computers is associated with tremendous anxiety, frustration, and even physical disorders," said Grosshandler. "Bit Bangers allow frustrated computer users a chance to release their negative emotions in a non-damaging way."

Bit Bangers come complete with an attractive display package, an illustrated instruction book, and a Bit Banger hanger (for attaching it to the computer).

"We are extremely proud of the successful SpaceLab I mission," said Grosshandler. "We know that Bit Bangers on future flights will help astronauts cope better with the computer hazards of space."

BITS & P.C.'S

1850 UNION STREET #490 • SAN FRANCISCO CA 94123 • (415) 929-7789

December 9, 1983

Dear Astronauts of the SpaceLab I Mission:

Congratulations on the successful mission and your safe return to the U.S.A. You have given the world further appreciation for the limitless potential of the human mind and spirit, to overcome obstacles and fulfill dreams. Your mission also demonstrated that some problems here on earth remain problems in space. Specifically, I refer to computer foul-ups. When your scheduled landing was delayed due to a computer malfunction, I immediately sympathized with your plight. Millions of Americans stoically endure similar computer frustration on an all too regular basis. Until now, there has been no real tool to combat psychological anguish and anxiety caused by uncooperative computers. So, it is with a patriotic heart beating in my chest, and a tongue firmly in cheek, that I present to you the enclosed Bit Banger: the ultimate weapon of survival in the computer age. The next time a Houston control or a Columbia space shuttle computer gives you cause for frustration, simply strike it several times with the foam-headed Bit Banger mallet. It will do wonders for your outlook, and cause no damage to the recalcitrant electronics. Remember, Bit Banger beats computer frustration. And, as our lives become increasingly computer-controlled, Bit Banger is the best way to beat those odds.

Once again, congratulations on your historic flight. You have made us all proud to be Americans.

Sincerely,

Debbie R. Grosshandler
President, Bits & P.C.'s
San Francisco, CA
"Makers of Bit Banger"



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BIT BANGERTM BATTLES "WORLD-WIDE" COMPUTER ANXIETY

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA -- Bit Banger, America's first and most successful weapon against computer frustration, has been introduced into Western Europe in a move to reduce computer frustration, the number one international anxiety of the '80s, according to Deborah Grosshandler, president and founder of Bits & P.C.'s in San Francisco.

"Computer anxiety knows no international bounds," reflected Ms. Grosshandler, who developed the Bit Banger to help the computer user cope with the stress of new high tech machines and technology.

More than 5,000 Bit Bangers have been sold since their debut late last year. Complete with high tech packaging, the foam-headed Bit Banger mallet stands 13½ inches tall and comes with a "Bit Banger Hanger" (for attaching it to a computer). An illustrated instruction booklet is also included.

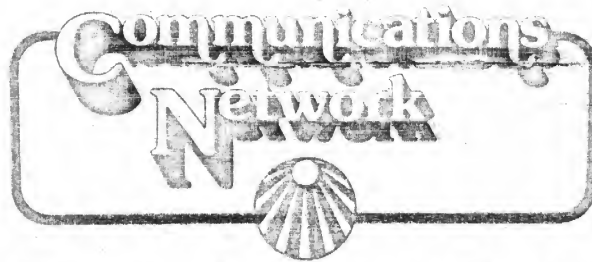
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European distribution of the Bit Banger began in February of this year. They are now available in England, Holland, France, and Austria. The Bit Banger is also marketed throughout Canada, the Far East, and Australia. Several new products from Bits & P.C.'s, all designed to create harmony between man and machine, will be introduced later this year.

Bit Bangers, which sell for \$6.95, may be ordered toll free by calling (800) 277-3900 (in California, call (800) 652-2122). Or, they may be ordered by writing to Bits & P.C.'s, 1850 Union Street #490, San Francisco, California 94123.

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B I O G R A P H Y

Deborah R. Grosshandler
President
Bits & P.C.'s
1850 Union Street, #490
San Francisco, California 94123

Entrepreneur...Financial Analyst...Systems Consultant...Successful Businesswoman...These are just a few words that describe Deborah Grosshandler, president and founder of Bits & P.C.'s, a unique manufacturing firm specializing in light-hearted accessories for the computer industry.

Founded in 1983, Bits & P.C.'s is laying the foundation for a new industry that revolves around the idea of having fun with computers and dealing with the stress associated with increasing use of high tech machines.

The firm's first product in a line of computer "companions" is the Bit BangerTM, a large foam-headed mallet for hitting a computer during moments of excessive frustration. The Bit Banger comes with an illustrated, humorous instruction booklet and a "Bit Banger Hanger" to attach it to a computer.

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Ms. Grosshandler developed the Bit Banger after experiencing computer frustration while working as a financial analyst for the oil industry. She found that striking her computer when it refused to cooperate released her anxiety and allowed her to solve the problem at hand. Hoping to share her discovery with other frustrated computer users, she started her own company, Bits & P.C.'s, to manufacture and market the Bit Bangers nationally and internationally.

To date, thousands of computer users have benefitted from the soothing psychological effects of striking a blow against high tech tyranny with their Bit Bangers.

Ms. Grosshandler received a Bachelor of Arts degree in finance and a Master's degree in business administration from Cleveland State University. She is a Certified Public Accountant and is active in the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, and the World Affairs Council.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Ms. Grosshandler has lived in San Francisco, California, for the past five years, where she currently oversees the production, manufacturing, and marketing for Bits & P.C.'s.

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Public Relations · Marketing · Media Consulting

ERGONOMICS: THE MOST INFLUENTIAL FORCE IN THE COMPUTER AGE

by Deborah Grosshandler

Accompanying the tremendous benefits related to the development of the microprocessor computer, there has been a tremendous increase in stress and frustration among computer users. The rapidly expanding use of computers has led to physical and psychological conditions which are presently being studied by researchers in the field of ergonomics, the study of the working environment.

The science of ergonomics deals with the interaction of people and machines. Ergonomic research also focuses on the environment of the workplace. Ergonomists seek to find solutions which provide more comfort, efficiency, and productivity for workers and businesses.

In the last decade computer use has spread to nearly every industry. Technological progress in the computer field allowing increased handling of information in more efficient and cost effective ways is the principal reason for the increasing use of computers from the largest to the smallest business.

Large numbers of workers have direct contact with computers and spend much of their day in front of a video display unit (VDU) or CRT-keyboard interface.

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One case study on the effects of computers on workers involves the largest Italian newspaper, Corriere della Sera (A. Grieco et al.). This case is a prime example of front line computerization since the printing industry currently faces the process of technological evolution that requires the replacement of linotypes with VDUs.

The replacement of the old typography department with the new photocomposition department gave rise to a series of complaints from 280 employees. The objections were primarily related to environmental factors such as lighting, climate, workplace design, optical screen characteristics, and job organization. Taking into account the employees' complaints, tensions, and frustrations within their present office, the management team of the Corriere della Sera designed a new workplace which led to decreased frustration and increased productivity.

Today, ergonomics has become a potent market force. Today's computers are more sophisticated and conform better to ergonomic requirements than their predecessors. Terminal and computer manufacturers the world over are now closely watching the development of a set of safety standards for video display units under consideration in West Germany. Relying heavily on ergonomic concepts, the rules will influence terminal designs worldwide.

More...

The new VDU safety standards will not become law in West Germany until January 1, 1985, but their consequences for electronic office equipment can be felt through the world already.

Digital Equipment Corporation, Honeywell Information Systems, Inc., International Business Machines Corporation, and other computer manufacturers are already changing their equipment for worldwide markets to comply with the standards. Entitled "Safety Regulations for Display Work Places in the Office Sector" and referred to as ZH 1/618, the standards cover VDUs, keyboards, document holders, microfilm readers, VDU tables, office chairs and footrests, illumination, ambient climate, work documents, equipment arrangement, and space requirements for the workplace.

The German ergonomic standards stipulate that keyboards, for example, must be separate from display units and that their height, measured at the middle key row, should not exceed 30 mm. If a keyboard is higher than this "low profile" design, it must be accompanied by a palm rest that is the width of the keyboard, has a depth between 50 and 100 mm, and either matches the height and inclination of the keyboard or is adjustable.

More...

Far more is at stake than the sales potential of the West German market because most of Europe is likely to accept Germany's stands on ergonomic matters. Germany, along with Sweden and Norway, has had a long tradition of concern for ergonomic issues. This tradition has grown from the powerful German trade-union movement. Its Trade Co-operative Associations (TCAs) take responsibility for 20 million employees in 1.7 million companies. An example of the TCAs' power as it extends throughout the office environment is evidenced by a law that requires every office worker to be able to see out an exterior window.

Other countries' governmental bodies, international committees, and private companies are also conducting ergonomic studies, making recommendations, and formulating regulations. Germany has taken the first step, that the rest of the world including the United States will quickly follow. Efforts are being made to transform some of the German regulations into world standards. In about two years, the International Standards Organization (ISO) will issue its ergonomic standards that are expected to go beyond the German draft.

Although the debate about various requirements of the German standards and those of other groups will continue, there is general agreement that such standards help to make work more comfortable for equipment users. And for management, informal studies suggest that ergonomic features offer a 10% to 15% increase in productivity.

More...

From this brief discussion, it can be concluded that man's progression is towards a high technological computer society complete with high productivity ratios as well as high frustration and anxiety levels. In order to succeed with the high paced computer age, the systems user must learn to work effectively with the computer in a more relaxed and less stressful environment. To accomplish this, ergonomic factors must be considered in order to achieve a rewarding and productive result for employee and management.

#

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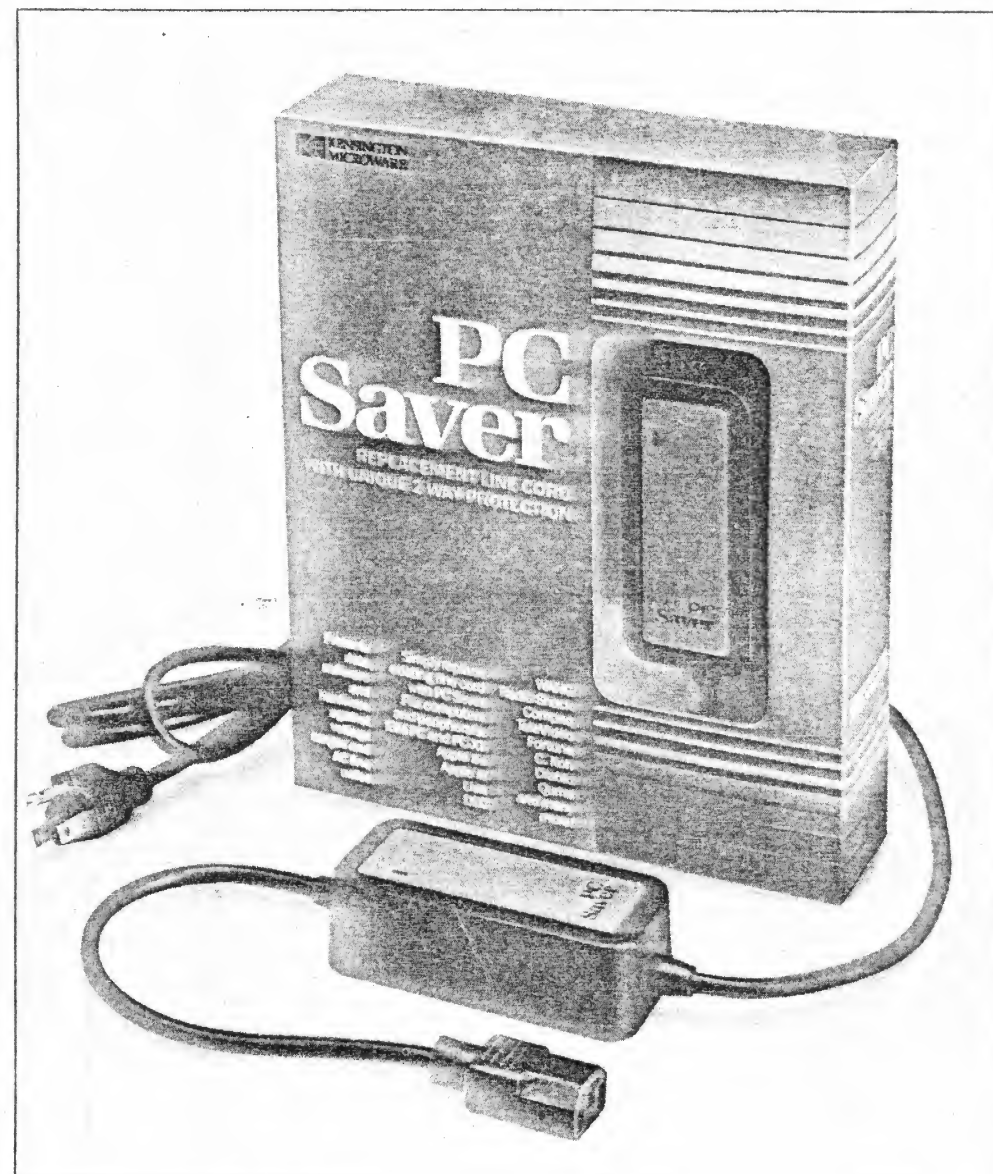
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CIRCLE 765 ON READER
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Bit Banger

A foam-headed mallet with plastic handle, useful for relieving a bit of computer frustration without harming a computer system. The mallets are compatible with all makes, types, and models of computers.

The 13½-inch Bit Bangers include a Bit Banger Hanger, permitting convenient



PC Saver, Kensington Microware

mounting near a user's system, and an instruction book. The instruction book outlines, with graphic illustrations, the range of computer problems for which the mallet may prove a useful remedy.

(List Price: \$14.95)

Bits & P.C.'s
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CIRCLE 768 ON READER
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When All Else Fails, Try Violence

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE
DECEMBER 4, 1983

ed to run on your computer, since computers that use CP/M have far capabilities. Computers that use CP/M operating system are of an old design and cannot take advantage of the newer technological advances of the last few years.

There are several versions of CP/M, some of which do work with the newer computers. However, the more popular version of the operating system, CP/M-80, works only with the old 8-bit machines. When I refer to CP/M, I am referring to CP/M-80, the most common version.

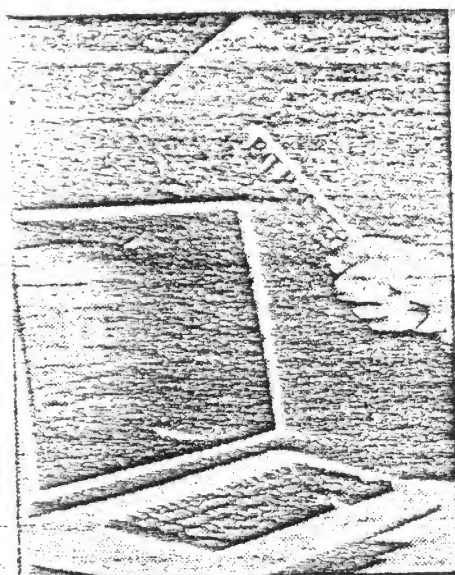
Most of the major business programs that run under CP/M have been converted to run under MS-DOS. Some of the programs developed for MS-DOS, taking advantage of more memory or other features generally not available on computers that use CP/M, will not be converted to run under CP/M.

If you purchase a computer that runs MS-DOS, you will have access to the best major business programs that are available under CP/M; you will also be able to use those that were developed specifically for MS-DOS. The availability of programs that run under MS-DOS will continue to grow as computers that use this operating system become more widespread.

In my opinion, the future of small business computers lies with those machines that are compatible with the IBM PC. There are numerous advantages to a computer in this category, not the least of which is that it is becoming the new standard for business computers.

Nevertheless, it is a newer technology that is still growing and changing. The fact that there are varying degrees of compatibility makes the choice of computers more difficult (unless, of course, you purchase an IBM PC).

This does not mean that computers that use CP/M are no longer a viable alternative. These computers have served businesses well for a number of years and will continue to do so for some time. Although CP/M computers represent a less sophisticated technology, they offer a more stable environment. They also tend to offer a significant cost savings.



BY BEN FONG-TORRES

You say your Apple's been acting rotten? Your Atari's committed hara-kiri? Your Kaypro's become a Kaycon? Your TRS-80's been 80'd? Your Hewlett-Packard's packed it in? Your IBM is acting like an IBM? You wish your Osborne never had been? And you're ready to give your Digital the finger?

Well, help is here, thanks to Debbie Grosshandler of San Francisco and her invention, the "Bit Banger."

It's a large mallet with which to hit a computer in moments of frustration. So as not to actually destroy a system, the Banger is made with a foam head. A Velcro-backed strap allows it to be hung near a terminal. And it comes with a

cute little instruction booklet. In short, it's a novelty item, a high-tech pet rock.

But when Grosshandler thought up the Bit Banger, she wasn't joking. A financial analyst and systems consultant since 1978, she's installed systems throughout the country. "One day last February," she said, "I was getting very frustrated with a problem. Then I saw this cartoon of a guy smashing his computer with a hammer, and I thought it'd be wonderful to have something to hit the computer with, but not hurt it."

Grosshandler made one up for herself and quickly found use for it. "One day I kept getting 'I/O Error' on the screen. I got my Bit Banger and after hitting it I actually felt better. I was able to take the computer apart, and I discovered the second disk drive had something wrong with it."

It wasn't long before she founded a company, Bits & P.C.'s, and put together enough money to manufacture 7500 Bangers, get a post office box and an 800 number for taking orders (832-2122) and hire an artist and writer. Now Grosshandler is placing Bit Bangers in computer, department and gift stores.

Last month, she said, "The editor of Time magazine called and ordered one. And I knew I had something." She immediately left her job to devote full time to the Bit Banger.

If Bit Bangers take off, at \$14.95 each, Grosshandler will be expanding beyond California. If they whimper, she can take some advice right out of the Big Bangers booklet: "The show's over. Pack up your Bit Banger and good luck on the job search."

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